5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RHI Caucasia RH1

175 on the other the military power of the tribes was a constant
721 menace to the difficult line of communications with Transcaucasia, a menace the more dangerous when considered in conjunction with the friendly relations between the mountaineers and the Turks, and the latter's naval control of the Black Sea. In 1816 therefore, when Yermolov became Viceroy of the Caucasus, Russia's military obligations in Europe and in Persia being for the moment eased, it was decided to undertake the reduction of the mountain tribes.

726 The operations[1] which extended along the whole length of
175 the Cossack Line, a length of over 450 miles, were divided into three groups. On the right flank, the Cherkesses and Abkhazians were to be attacked; on the centre, the Kabards and Ossets; on the left flank the Chechens and the tribes of Daghestan. Of these three groups, the task allotted to the troops on the left flank was the most difficult. The western tribes though brave were not numerous; their strength had been sapped by a plague originally introduced by Turkish sailors, while the central tribes, Kabards and Ossets, had already received some severe lessons and gave little further trouble. The Chechen tribes, however, were numerous and capable guerrilla fighters, while the thick forests covering their hills made difficult any general advance. Daghestan presented still more formidable obstacles. The area inhabited by the troublesome tribes consisted, as we have seen, of a narrow strip of littoral along the Caspian coast and an elevated table-land, through which a large number of streams had cut channels of a great depth, the whole rising south and west to lofty mountain chains, with several peaks of over
726 13,000 feet in height. The Lesghians, further, were the most
361 numerous—at the beginning of the war they are estimated
175 to have numbered nearly 2,000,000—and the most highly organised of all the tribes. And when threatened by superior forces, they would retire into their *auls* or fortified villages, situated on the most inaccessible parts of the mountains. These villages were so placed that the artillery of those days could seldom be brought to bear with effect on them, and their capture was only possible by storm—" a formidable business when every individual house has its garrison of desperate men, and still more desperate women. . . . The houses were of stone, two stories high; . . . they were disposed, as far as possible, amphitheatre-wise, so as to enfilade one another, the streets being tortuous and barely wide enough for two horsemen to ride abreast; straddled, too, in places by a house furnished

[1] D.C., in the Mountain War of 1824-64; see cat 116, p 199 -- Analyst]

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

with a wooden bar or portcullis, making passage impossible until the defenders posted there had been ousted or killed." [1]

In 1818–20 Yermolov commenced operations against the Chechens by the construction of the forts of Grozni ("Threatening") and Vnezapnaia ("Fort Surprise"), while the Armenian General Madatov reduced the Lesghian Khanates of Sheki (with Nukha), Kiuri (with Akhti), Tabasseran, Kara-Kaitagh, Kazi-Kumukh, Khuntzakh (the capital of the Avar), and Akusha (the capital of the Dargo) Khans. In 1822 the central part of the Line was advanced into the Kabardan country, and the tribesmen, ravaged by a fourteen-years' plague, were reduced with cruel severity. Two years later the Chechens were attacked, but succeeded in inflicting several small defeats on the Russians.

The tribes were thoroughly roused by the brutal methods of the Russians, who had marched over their hills, burning auls, carrying off flocks, destroying crops and levelling trees, and there now arose at Ghimri in Avar Daghestan two preachers, Kazi [1] Mullah and Sheikh Shamil, who initiated a movement, Muridism, which at first advocated religious reform, temperance and the cessation of blood-feuds, but soon developed into a fierce agitation, at once religious and political, against the Russians. A common danger had at last united the warring tribes, and the leaders of the movement appealed to that fanatical religious feeling which alone could bind together peoples lacking common national traditions and ideals. Shamil was the more remarkable, although Kazi Mullah, until his death, overshadowed him as Imam, or secular head of the Murids. Desperately brave, a devoted husband and father, Shamil was at the same time cruel, treacherous, and jealous of the success of his subordinate chiefs. He frequently showed himself not only a skilful partisan-leader but a clever strategist, while his success in uniting the tribes was due as much to his administrative and organising ability as to his personal magnetism and power of rousing the religious fervour of the mass of the mountaineers by rhetoric and by a clever assumption of religious sanctity. In the latter respect he has been compared to Muhammad, for he showed a deep knowledge of psychology and an understanding of dramatic effect in the mysterious ceremonies, personal flagellations and supposed communings with the Prophet by which he imposed on the credulity and ignorance of his followers. But as his courage, organising ability and cunning laid the foundations of his

[1] Baddeley, ch. xxxii.

[1] Properly Ghazi.

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

175 success, so his cruelty, tyranny, injustice, jealousy and nepotism
668 encompassed his downfall. He alone was responsible for the
159 resistance against the best troops and generals of Russia during more than twenty-five years, but he too by his exactions and merciless discipline destroyed the *moral* of the mountaineers and the prestige of the Murids, and brought about the development of that state of mind which eventually made the tribes whom he had led in victory and defeat ready to desert him and to submit to Russian rule.

175 The history of the Russian war against the mountaineers
● 726 is largely one of raids and counter-raids, of cruel destruction
668 of crops and villages, of massacres and desperate sieges. In outline it may be divided into three phases: (1) 1829–39—including the campaigns of the first and second Imams, Kazi Mullah (1825–32) and Hamzad Beg (1832–4), the election of Shâmil as third Imam and the apparent extinction of his power after the Russian capture of his stronghold Akhulgo (1839): (2) 1840–49—covering the period of Shamil's greatest victories, when his authority extended from the Caspian to the Daryal and from Elisu to the walls of Grozni; and (3) 1850–59—when Shamil's popularity was gradually waning, and when the Russians were encroaching into the hitherto impassable mountains by a plan of campaign directed rather against nature than against Shamil, which comprehended the systematic levelling of forests and building of roads and bridges.

Space fails us wherein to describe the operations and the desperate fighting that took place during the first two of these periods. But an account of an eye-witness of the destruction of the great aul of Germenchug may be taken as showing the typical and magnificent courage of the mountaineers and the difficulties with which the Russians had to contend. "When the aul was in flames," says the narrator, "the Russian commander proposed to grant quarter to the survivors. The defenders listened to the proposal, conferred together for some minutes, and then a half-naked Chechen, black with smoke, came out and made a short speech, followed by a volley from all the loopholes. What he said was to this effect: 'We want no quarter; the only grace we ask of the Russians is to let our families know that we died as we lived, refusing submission to a foreign yoke.' Orders were now given to fire the houses from all sides. The sun had set and the picture of destruction and ruin was lighted only by the red glow of the flames. The Chechens, firmly resolved to die, set up their death-song, loud at first, but sinking lower and lower as their

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

numbers diminished under the influence of fire and smoke." "With hearts like stones," concludes the narrator, "the victors sought the refuge of their tents; and maybe more than one in the depth of his being asked himself, why must such things be? Is there no room for all on this earth, without distinction of speech or faith?" [1]

During the third period (1850–59) the Russians confined themselves to the reduction of the Murids by slower but very efficacious means. In the south they built forts to protect the native States from all invasions; on the north they gradually advanced through Chechnia, and pursued a persistent policy of destroying the forests and of removing the mountain population to the northern steppe. At the same time Shamil's influence was waning. His tyranny bore heavily upon the villagers who, further, were weary of the constant warfare of a nature very different from their traditional raids; and his jealousy and nepotism alienated his lieutenants, the most famous of whom, Haji Murad, deserted to the Russians in 1851, as the result of a plot formed by Shamil against his life.

Simultaneously with the campaign against the eastern tribes the Russians had been engaged in long and tedious hostilities with the Cherkesses and Abkhazians. But the fighting in the Western Caucasus at no time attained to the intensity of that in Daghestan.

The Crimean War, which broke out in 1853, failed even to revive the fortunes of Shamil. The gross incompetence of the Turkish commanders in Armenia gave him little opportunity for co-operation, and he confined himself to two inconsiderable raids into Kakhetia. On the west the British fleet bombarded the Cossack posts along the coast, which afforded some relief to the Cherkesses, who still maintained a guerrilla war there.

In the autumn of 1855 a Turkish army of 20,000 men, under Omar Pasha, landed at Sukhum Kale, and after defeating a small Russian force on the Ingur advanced on Kutais. But the autumn rains made further operations by the badly-equipped Turkish army impossible, while the Mingrelians—much to the disgust of Laurence Oliphant, who was accompanying Omar—received the Turks with marked lack of enthusiasm. Omar reached Sugdidi, but was compelled to retire into winter quarters at Sukhum, whence his troops were withdrawn on the conclusion of the war.

At that time anti-Russian feeling was strong in England,

[1] Baddeley, pp. 373–4.

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

669 In the Transcaucasus a Social Democratic "Commissariat" had superseded the "Caucasian Committee" at Tiflis. This 642 body, which represented all nationalities (three Georgians, three Armenians, three Tatars and two Russians) was presided over by the Georgian Gegéchkori. It drew its authority from a "Transcaucasian Seim" composed of the Caucasian members of the recently elected All-Russian Constituent Assembly, with the further addition of two members for each original one, the various parties increasing their membership in proportion to the last election figures. Further, the Commissariat and Seim worked in conjunction with the various Workmen's, Soldiers' and Municipal Councils, and with Georgian, Armenian and Tatar "National Committees."

In spite, however, of this inevitable organisation on nationalist lines, the Commissariat still endeavoured to maintain the co-operation of the different races and the principle of unity with Russia; and at the Georgian National Congress in November 1917 the Georgian Social Democratic leaders Jordania and Chenkeli emphasised these principles.

VI

RECENT HISTORY

● 726 As in Russia, the most urgent necessity for Georgia was the conclusion of an early peace. The Turkish commander on the 648 Turko-Caucasian front, Ferik Mehmed Vehib Pasha, proposed a cessation of hostilities at the beginning of December, in accordance with the action of the German General Staff on the Polish front, and on December 14 General Prjevalski, who still held nominal command of the Russo-Caucasian troops, signed an armistice at Erzinjan. During the following month the anarchy behind the Russian lines increased. Turkish agents were active in the Muhammadan districts of Transcaucasia, encouraging the Tatars and Ajars to attack the disorganised bodies of Russian troops who were making their way home through Transcaucasia. Armenian bands were attacking Turkish villages in the Russian area, and were preparing a desperate resistance to the Turkish advance.

In mid-January 1918 the Ottoman Government made a further *démarche*, addressing itself now to the "Independent Transcaucasian Government," which it invited to participate in the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. It was a development of the Turkish policy, revealed at the outbreak of war, of constructing

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

a buffer-State in the Caucasus. But the Social Democrats were still loyal to their ideal of a Federal Russia, and demanded a respite "in order to combine their action with the opinions and views of other autonomous Governments in Russia."[1] They then communicated with the Ukrainian Rada at Kiev and with the South-eastern Union at Ekaterinodar. Meanwhile the Turkish Command emphasised the urgency of a settlement by a general advance, under pretext of protecting the Mussulman population behind the Russian lines from the attacks of the Armenians.

In the middle of February Turkish troops reoccupied Erzinjan (February 12), Baiburt (February 14) and Trebizond (February 24). Nevertheless, when the Seim met on February 28, all parties, including even the Tatars, maintained their attitude of co-operation with the non-Bolshevist parties in Russia, and of refusal to participate with the Bolsheviks in the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk. On March 1 they agreed on the four heads of a peace settlement which provided for the restoration of the frontiers of 1914 and the creation of an autonomous Armenia "within the frame of the Turkish State."

Next day the Tiflis Government received a telegram from the Bolshevist Commissary Karakhan, announcing the retrocession to Turkey of the districts of Batum, Ardahan and Kars. The Transcaucasian Government protested that any treaty "signed without its consent" was "void of international importance," and repeated its willingness to discuss a settlement on the basis of the proposals of March 1. But the Turkish Government replied that the cession of the territories in question had been completed, while the Transcaucasus, according to the statements of its own Government, was a part of Russia, and insisted on the immediate evacuation of the ceded districts. The Turkish Command immediately undertook a double offensive against Erzerum and Batum. Armenian troops and volunteers, under General Nazarbekian and the partisan leaders Antranik and Murad, offered a desperate resistance. But the Georgian troops, under General Odichelidze, unwilling to exhaust their strength in the defence of the Turkish Armenian districts, withdrew. On March 11 the Turks entered Erzerum; during the following month they reoccupied the remaining districts of Turkish Armenia, and approached Kars by Olti and Sarikamish. At the same time the Mussulmans rose in the Province of Kars. All communications were cut, and the

[1] Doc. & Mat., Nos. 15–25.

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

726 648

insurgents seized Ardahan and Merdenik, while the panic-stricken Christian population fled towards Batum or Akhaltsikh.

Further, there was serious friction between the Georgian and Armenian commanders, the former hesitating to co-operate seriously in the defence of the Kars line. Nevertheless, when the Seim met on March 11 the Armenian and Georgian groups still worked together. Jordania opposed the Brest concessions. The Tatars, however, had already committed themselves definitely to a Turkish orientation, and it was evident that they were no longer willing to co-operate in the maintenance of Transcaucasian unity. A week later occurred the Mussavetist attempt to overthrow the Soviet at Baku, and with the departure of the Mussavetist leaders for Elisavetpol the Transcaucasian Seim lost the last semblance of control over the Eastern districts.

During the latter part of March and the beginning of April a Transcaucasian Delegation under the presidency of Mr. Chenkeli was negotiating at Trebizond with the Turkish plenipotentiary Khalil Bey. Chenkeli, more conscious at Trebizond than the Government at Tiflis of the desperate situation, at last agreed to recognise the Brest Treaty. The Turks thereupon pressed for a declaration of Transcaucasian independence, and on April 13 delivered a forty-eight hours' ultimatum. The Seim was still unwilling to yield, and the Delegation was recalled to Tiflis. On April 14 the Turks entered Batum after a feeble resistance. They then advanced to Notanebi and Ozurgeti. On April 27 they occupied Kars. The situation was desperate. The Government of Gegéchkori resigned, and Chenkeli, who had advocated the concessions, succeeded, and proclaimed the Independence of Transcaucasia.

But the Turks immediately advanced fresh demands. They now had plans far more ambitious than the restoration of the territories lost in 1878. They were in communication with the Tatar National Committee of Elisavetpol, and with a delegation from the Union of Mountaineers which had come to Trebizond. And they conceived an advance on Baku and the extension of their power over all Azerbaijan, Daghestan and North-west Persia. They therefore demanded the surrender of the Alexandropol-Julfa railway-line, "so as to prevent a British concentration in Azerbaijan," [1] and began an attack on the Armenians at Alexandropol. On May 15 Alexandropol fell, and the Turks subsequently occupied Elisavetpol (June 1) and Tabriz (June 15).

[1] *New Europe*, December 28, 1918.

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

The Georgian Social Democratic Republic (*May* 1918–20).—726 While the Turks and the Tatars were attacking the Armenians 648 in the region of Alexandropol, Erivan and Kara Bagh, the Transcaucasian Government continued at Batum negotiations for a definite peace with Turkey. The interests of the Armenians and Georgians were now widely divergent, for whilst the very existence of the former was threatened by a Turkish control of the Eastern Caucasus, the latter, from their geographical position, were able to regard the Turkish menace with fewer misgivings, and were only anxious to save themselves from becoming involved in further hostilities. Thus, while the Armenian National Committee at Erivan directed an exclusive policy, the Transcaucasian Government at Tiflis tended more definitely each week to represent Georgian interests alone.

But Khalil Bey, at Batum, showed no intention of allowing the Georgians to assume a neutral attitude towards the Armeno-Turkish war. He demanded the right "to bring military help" to prevent the formation of bands in Transcaucasian territory; control of the railways and of Russian ships in Transcaucasian ports; free passage for Turkish troops and military stores through Transcaucasian territory; and immediate demobilisation of all the armed forces at the disposal of the Transcaucasian Government. Further, he patronised Mussulman delegations from the districts of Akhaltsikh and Akhalkalaki, who petitioned for annexation to Turkey. Meanwhile the Bolshevist dictator at Baku, Shaumian, an Armenian, was organising a Red Army of Russian and Armenian workmen, with the professed intention of marching on Tiflis and destroying "that nest of Menshevist reaction." And in the maritime region Bolshevist ships of the Black Sea Fleet bombarded Sukhum and other watering-places, while a Bolshevist force marched along the coast and occupied Sochi, Gagri and Sukhum.

In this situation the Transcaucasian Government commenced to negotiate for German intervention through the medium of the German representative at Batum, General v. Lossow. The German Government at this time had differences with the Porte on questions of general military policy, and was anxious to check Turkish aggression in the Caucasus, in order to secure the transference of Turkish troops to the Syrian front. During April the Germans had occupied Odessa, Nikolaev and Sevastopol, and had seized the bulk of the Black Sea Fleet. Accordingly they were soon in a position to intervene effectively. On May 25 8,000 German troops under General Kress v. Kressenstein landed at Poti, and German

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

pickets appeared on all the frontiers of Georgia. On the same day the Transcaucasian Seim voted its own dissolution, and in the evening Jordania announced the declaration of the Independence of the Georgian Republic. Three days later an agreement was concluded at Poti between v. Lossow and Chenkeli, by which the railways and all naval tonnage were ceded to Germany for the duration of the war. By a later agreement, signed at Batum, the Georgian Government guaranteed to Turkey the free transit of petroleum by the pipe-line from Baku to Batum.

The apologia of the Georgian Social Democrats for the German Agreement is set forth in a memorandum to the International Socialist Bureau: "We tried to unite the Transcaucasian peoples to defend the whole of the country. But our attempt was broken by the national hatred of the Armenians and Tatars, which was rending Transcaucasia. . . . We remained alone, in a ring of fire, surrounded by enemies on all sides. The Turks marched on us from west and south, the Bolsheviks menaced from the north, and the Tatars from the east. . . . Germany alone was able to tear us away from the noose of the Turkish agreement on the condition that we handed over to her the control of our railway system. . . . No other means remained to deliver us from the Turkish occupation. Our sovereignty as to the railways was, anyhow, destroyed by our defeat. And we signed the Treaty with the Germans, gave them our railways, received their regiments, on the sole condition—which they fulfilled—to defend us from Turkey and not to interfere with our internal affairs. However," they add, "during the darkest days, when German help was most needed, we did not renounce the right of pitilessly criticising German Imperialism."

The German occupation undoubtedly saved Georgia from anarchy, while the diplomatic support of the German mission allowed the Tiflis Government to pursue a policy, in relation particularly to Armenia, which was scarcely consonant with its "pitiless criticism of German Imperialism." During the spring a military force had been organised at Tiflis round the nucleus of a body of armed workmen, and was styled "The National Guard." This body, after wavering for some time between Bolshevism and a Chauvinistic form of Nationalism, was finally persuaded by its leaders to devote itself to the defence and other interests of the Georgian Republic. The first campaign of the young army was the invasion and occupation of the Armenian part of the Borchalu district,

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RHI

Akhalkalaki, and the circuit of Phambak in the government of Alexandropol, on the pretext that Armenia was "unable to build a viable State." When the Erivan Government protested to v. Kressenstein, he replied that "Germany as an ally had engaged itself to support the Georgian claims." [1]

On the north the revival of the Volunteer Army, during the late summer of 1918, enabled the National Guard to drive the Bolsheviks from Sukhum, Gagri and Sochi, and to occupy the mountain districts of the Abkhazians and Ossets, with all the western and central passes of the Caucasus, including the Mamison and Daryal, controlling respectively the Ossetian and Georgian Military Roads.

The conclusion of the armistice in November 1918 greatly modified the situation in Transcaucasia. While the Germans and Turks withdrew respectively from Georgia and Azerbaijan, the British assumed control of Batum and Baku and the line of the Transcaucasian Railway, while the Armenians proceeded to occupy Alexandropol, Kars, Ardahan and Ardanuch.

Three distinct influences must be considered in relation to the situation: (1) the mutual relations of the three national Republics; (2) The attitude of the Russian counter-revolutionary Government at Ekaterinodar; and (3) the policy of the Entente Powers.

(1) Although circumstances now favoured the Armenians, they were so exhausted by the struggle of the preceding year that the Turks at Erzerum and the Tatars at Baku still remained a real menace to their safety. Nevertheless on their Georgian frontier they undertook an offensive against Akhalkalaki and Shulaveri, with the object of regaining the territories occupied by the Georgians during the summer. The Armenians gained some initial successes, but an armistice was imposed by the Allied authorities and the ultimate allocation of the disputed territories was left to the decision of the Peace Conference at Paris. In Tiflis the Armenian offensive and the hostile attitude of the Volunteer Army on the northern frontier proved the occasion of a cruel persecution of the considerable Russian and Armenian element. During January 1919 numbers of Russians and Armenians were assaulted in the streets, and the military capacity of the National Guard was demonstrated in the systematic looting of houses in the Armenian quarter.

During the following months however the Georgian Government made a genuine effort to reconcile national differences

[1] *New Russia*, ii, 23, July 8, 1920.

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RHI Caucasia RH1

726 and to bring about a degree of co-operation between the national
648 Governments. Various proposals were made for the convocation of a conference of the Transcaucasian States, but the hostility between Baku and Erivan continued to obstruct the conclusion of any common political agreement. However, the signature of the Railway and Postal Convention between the three Governments in the autumn of 1919 was hailed as the first step towards the establishment of a Transcaucasian Confederation.

(2) The counter-revolutionary leaders at Ekaterinodar bore almost as much animosity against the Georgian Socialists as against the Bolsheviks. On the other hand the Georgian Socialists did not hesitate to stigmatise the "Tsarist Generals" as reactionaries—although Mr. Gegéchkori had, in an interview with General Alexeiev, stated that "within our borders the struggle against Bolshevism is implacable"—and they further asserted a series of claims as to the possession or "self-determination" of the Sochi district. Finally, in March 1919, Denikin prepared to make an end of the Caucasian nationalist movement. On the Black Sea coast he occupied Sochi, and the Georgians retired behind the Bzib. At the same time a Russian force occupied Temir-Khan-Shura and brought to an end the "Republic of the Mountaineers."

(3) The policy of the Allies in the Caucasus had been governed by the broader consideration of the Russian Revolutionary question as a whole. While supporting the Russian counter-revolutionaries they had at the same time acquiesced in, or encouraged, the formation of autonomous governments among the border peoples. These, in principle, they were unwilling to recognise as independent, although there was a strong influence in the direction of Allied—particularly of British—policy, which favoured the erection and consistent support of a belt of independent border States. Denikin's attack on the Caucasian Republics provoked a protest from the British Black Sea Command. A small British force was landed at Gagri, between the Volunteer troops at Sochi and the Georgians near Pitsunda, and Denikin, who was dependent on British support in the campaign against the Bolsheviks, was constrained to stop his offensive.

A result of Denikin's offensive was a further effort of the Georgian Government to organise a Transcaucasian alliance—if not a confederation. On July 16, 1919 a Military Convention was signed between Georgia and Azerbaijan, with the object of combined defensive action against the Volunteer Army. But

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RHI Caucasia RHI

Erivan, careful of offence to the Allies, and fearing a Turko-Tatar rather than a Russian attack, held aloof.

In the autumn of 1919 the combination against Denikin developed into a formidable rising of the Daghestanli Khans, which was certainly subsidised and abetted by the Azerbaijan Government. Levies were raised to the number of about 30,000, including 1,000 Turkish *askars*, and organised by fugitive Turkish officers and Tatars, ex-officers of the Imperial Army. In conjunction with Bolshevist elements from Astrakhan the insurgents attacked Derbend and Petrovsk, and threatened other towns. Denikin, at a critical moment, was therefore forced to withdraw two Cossack divisions with armoured cars from the front in Central Russia, but he was successful after a few weeks' campaign in subduing the Khans.

In August the British evacuated all points in Transcaucasia except Batum. A first consequence of this action was a closer Turko-Tatar *rapprochement*, and a desire on the part of the Armenian Government, manifested in a Treaty of Arbitration (November 13), to arrive at a closer understanding with Georgia.

At the beginning of 1920 the collapse of the Volunteer Army and the advance of the Bolsheviks into the Kuban caused the Georgian Government to make one last attempt to achieve some form of co-operation among the Transcaucasian States. The Prime Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan were induced to meet and discuss the vexed Zangezur question. But the Tatars were attracted by the prospect of a military alliance with the Turkish Nationalist Government against the Armenians, and concentrated their troops in the Zangezur region. On April 27 the Bolsheviks seized Baku.

The relations of the Tiflis Government with Moscow had, until Denikin's collapse, been normal. Chicherin had, in fact, proposed a Georgian attack on Denikin at the beginning of January. But Gegéchkori had professed disinterestedness in the Russian Civil War, and had refused to permit Georgia to become involved in "a military adventure which would be far beyond her strength." Further negotiations had then taken place, and peace had been agreed upon in principle. But the Bolshevist Staff was notoriously independent of Moscow, and Georgia might expect an immediate attack. During April indeed the Bolsheviks occupied the Gagri district in spite of Georgian protests and raided the Gori district from the north. On May 1 there was a Bolshevist outbreak at Tiflis.

The Polish War however, induced the Bolsheviks to suspend all aggression in the East. Consequently a Treaty was signed

5· Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

726 648

at Moscow (June 12) by which the Soviet Government recognised the independence of Georgia, and disclaimed all interest in the internal affairs of that country. Georgia was to receive Batum, should it be evacuated by the British, and a neutral zone was established on each side of the Caucasian Mountains. But the cynical attitude of the Bolsheviks towards the Treaty, which they regarded as merely of a temporary nature, was indicated by the correspondence of Chicherin with Mustafa Kemal Pasha, in which he approved the latter's proposal to decide by plébiscite the future of Batum and other regions.

While the Moscow negotiations were in progress the Supreme Council had decided on the evacuation of Batum, and at the beginning of July 1920 the Franco-British troops were withdrawn. The Georgians had already occupied Artvin (May 6), and on July 9 the control of Batum was formally transferred to them by the British High Commissioner, Colonel Stokes.

The evacuation of Batum by the Allies was significant of their intention to abstain from all active intervention in Transcaucasia. Georgia and Armenia were left to their own resources. The situation in the two countries became extremely critical during the autumn of 1920. The people were demoralised by the long period of political crises. In Georgia economic life was disorganised by the unfavourable rate of exchange with Europe, by the impossibility of resuming normal relations with the Northern Caucasus and Azerbaijan, and by the uncertainty of the supply of oil-fuel from Baku. In Armenia the peasants were disheartened by the delay in the solution of the Turkish Armenian question, and the productive capacity of the country was strained to an extreme limit by the necessity of supporting hundreds of thousands of refugees. Thousands of deaths from malnutrition and exposure were occurring, and cholera and typhus were ravaging the crowded villages.

It was patent to all observers that both countries must succumb to a vigorous attack. Their continued independence depended on the preoccupation of the Bolsheviks in other quarters.

In November the conclusion of the Polish War and the unexpected collapse of the White Army in the Crimea precipitated the crisis. The Bolsheviks were now free to despatch troops to the Transcaucasus. At the same time the fall of Venizelos and the political changes in Greece permitted the Turks to withdraw troops from the Smyrna front for despatch to Erzerum. In the middle of September they commenced operations in the regions of Kars and Igdir, and in November the movement

5: Allen H-4 (no date) 1923 RH1 Caucasia RH1

developed formidable proportions. The demoralised Armenians lacked munitions, uniforms and food, and further, they could hope for no help from the Allies. Kars fell, almost without a shot, and the inhabitants of Erivan only avoided a Turkish occupation by the establishment of a Soviet and recognition of the authority of the Moscow Government.

The Georgians were in a precarious position. Sporadic Bolshevist outbreaks occurred at Tiflis and Batum, and further, the Georgians appear to have been disheartened by the attitude of the British Government, who during the negotiations at Genoa with the Soviet Government appeared to ignore the interests of the Caucasian Governments, and failed to make any suggestion that they should be recognised by the Soviet Government or even to stipulate for their immunity from immediate attack. When the Armenians were attacked the Georgian Government hesitated to make any effort to assist them, and confined themselves, after the Turks had taken Kars and Alexandropol, to occupying the Armenian towns of Ardahan and Ardanuch, officially as a friendly and protective measure.

In the middle of February the Bolsheviks commenced an attack on Georgia. Armenian troops moved on Shulaveri, while a strong force of Bolshevist cavalry advanced up the valley of the Kur towards Tiflis, and detachments crossed the Mamison and Daryal Passes. At the same time another Bolshevist force advanced from Gagri towards Sukhum. The Armenian thrust was repulsed, but the force moving along the Kur was supported by a Bolshevist rising of Russian and Armenian elements in Tiflis, and the Georgian defence was disorganised by the defection of part of the National Guard. In the last week of February Tiflis fell, and the Georgian Government withdrew to Kutais. At the beginning of March the Bolsheviks occupied Mtzkhet and Gori.

Meanwhile the Nationalist Turks occupied Ardahan, Ardanuch and Artvin by agreement with the Georgians, and on March 9 entered Batum.

The Turko-Georgian understanding did not, however, modify the situation. A Georgian rally on the Suram ridge had been expected. But while the Bolshevist Black Sea force took Sukhum and Poti, the Kur army entered Kutais, and the Government of Jordania fled on board an Italian warship at Batum. On March 17 the Bolsheviks approached that town. The Georgian Government troops then deserted to the Bolsheviks, and attacked the small Turkish detachment, which was forced to withdraw.

The Bolsheviks subsequently[1] established Soviets at Batum and Tiflis under the leaders of Georgian Bolshevism, and a Treaty was signed between Angora and Moscow, which confirmed the Turkish occupation of Ardahan, Artvin and Kars, and guaranteed to the Turks free goods transit to Batum.

Following the Kars Conference (October–November 1921), which regulated the relations of the Angora Government and the Caucasian Bolshevist Governments, confirmed the Turks in the possession of Kars and Ardahan, and established a special régime for the Batum Provinces, the Soviet Government abolished by decree the independence of the three Soviet Republics of Transcaucasia, and established one federal union under Russian control, with a political capital at Baku—the centre of Bolshevist influence—and an economic capital at Tiflis. It should be added that the representatives of the four exiled Caucasian Governments (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Daghestan) have also "concluded an alliance and established an understanding" by an agreement signed in Paris on June 10, 1921, providing for co-ordination of foreign policy, compulsory arbitration in disputes, and a Customs Union.

In general the situation indicates the development of a further phase of the Russian Revolution—the failure of the separatist movement of the border races and the reconstruction of the Russian Imperial unit through the agency of the Bolshevist military machine. Such a consummation in the Caucasus was, perhaps, inevitable. For the history of the last four years has demonstrated the political instability and military weakness of the national States. And from the standpoint of Russian Imperial policy the re-establishment of control over the Caucasus was a strategic and economic necessity.

Thus for reasons political, economic and moral, it is unquestionable that the future of the Transcaucasian peoples must lie in intimate union with Russia. The actual form of association between Russia and the Transcaucasians, as also the other border races, still remains to be evolved. But it is to be hoped that a liberal autonomy will allow to Georgians, Tatars, Armenians and Mountaineers alike the opportunity for prosperous economic development, and for the preservation of their individual characteristics. In an age of standardisation the distinctive cultures of ancient races are at once a source of advantage to civilisation and of delight to the individual.

[1] [for events preceding the settlement of 1921, see cont. 116, p 215 ff.--Analyst]